

The Bulletin

The Historical Society of Decatur County
Greensburg, Indiana

Volume 9 Issue 1

Spring 2004

Historia Est Curriculum Vitae
— History is the Course
of Life

Popular Bridal Exhibit Expanded



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pictures. Those who have items they wish to exhibit are encouraged to call exhibit coordinator Ginny Garvey at 663-2132.

The museum, located at 222 North Franklin Street, is open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday & Sunday, April

through December.

The President's Letter

By Diana Springmier



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LETTER FROM MAN WHO WAS READY TO FIGHT MORGAN

(Or, rumors ran amok 141 years ago too!)

Researched & Submitted by: Pat Smith

John Hunt Morgan and his Raiders came into Indiana in July 1863 in the southeastern part of the state. It was thought that he was headed to Indianapolis to liberate southern prisoners there. On Saturday, Sunday and Monday, July 11, 12 and 13 he was expected in Decatur County. It turned out that only a few of his scouts came into the southern part of the county but men were armed and prepared to defend the county seat.

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Business was resumed today which makes things look natural again. Yesterday, Monday, nearly all the business houses were closed the whole day. We miss the boys though. Give my respects to them all. Say to Jim Woodfill, however, not to allow himself to yield to the besetments against which every soldier had to guard, or be led astray. Your habits are fixed I believe so I will not give you the advice.

Very truly yours,

W. A. Moore

Westports of the World, Unite!

Westport, Indiana, is recognized in this part of the state for its civic pride and forward-looking citizens. The community is justly proud of its independent spirit and its willingness to "get involved" with civic activities of all kinds. There is the annual Westport Barbeque and Car Show, the Westport Covered Bridge Festival and, this summer from August 12-15, a unique observance known as "Westports of the World."

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Cool Mornings Call For Pancakes and Coffee

Pancake Flour, pkg.	10c
Pennant Syrup, 5 lbs.	29c
Oleo, a standard quality, high grade, lb.	10c
Everfresh Vacuum Seal Coffee, none better, lb.	25c
Quality Coffee, fancy Bourbon Santos, lb.	22c
Breakfast Bacon, piece, lb.	15c
Sliced, lb.	18c
1 Bran Flake, 1 Spoon	10c
All kinds of vegetables in their natural condition of freshness. Clean and tenderly crisp.	

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Please send check or money order payable to Historical Society of
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Tom Barker Video
4417 W. 310 North
Greensburg IN 47240
(812) 663-2381

RENEW your membership today!

Dues are payable January 1 each year! Don't miss out on important member benefits such as receiving The Bulletin. Individual membership is \$10, couples are \$15 and contributing membership is \$30. Please make your checks payable to the Historical Society of Decatur County. Send the check with this form to:

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Watch The Bulletin & The Greensburg Daily News for more information!

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Vice President:	David Miers
Corresponding & Recording Secretary:	Susan Blanton
Membership Secretary:	Rheadawn Metz
Treasurer:	Debbie Griewe

Board of Directors

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Tom Barker	Charity Mitchell
Terri-Ann Blanton	reed Schuster
Ed Deiwert	Russell Wilhoit

Society's Agent

William H. Robbins

Museum Director

Diana Springmier

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Email: rdorrel@shelbynet.net

County Genealogists

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Batesville, IN 47006

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Greensburg, IN 47240

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(Note: The original image contains additional prices for sliced bacon and a combined price for bran flakes and coffee, which are not explicitly labeled in the table above but are visible in the original image.)

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Society's Agent

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The Bulletin

The Historical Society of Decatur County
Greensburg, Indiana

Summer 2004

"The history of every
country lies in the heart of a
man or a woman"

— Willa Cather, 1913

Westport Covered Bridge Preservation and Restoration

For 124 years the Westport Covered Bridge served as a highway across Sandcreek 1.5 miles east of Westport. Before 1880 a traveler would have forded Sandcreek at the Lawrence Crossing. The covered bridge served as the main bridge across Sandcreek from 1880 until 1975 when a new concrete bridge was built on CR 1100 S.

The bridge is a Burr Arch covered bridge, 115 feet long, built by A.M. Kennedy and Sons in 1880. According to Richard Sanders Allen in "Covered Bridges of the Middle West" the Kennedy family built more than 50 bridges in Indiana.

The Westport Covered Bridge is one of eleven covered bridges left in the state built by the Kennedy family. Archibald McMichael Kennedy (born in 1818) settled in Rush County in 1834 to carpenter and raise barns. He and his sons, Emmett and Charles, lived and worked in Rushville, Ind. They built their first bridge in 1870 – a 300 foot span over the east fork of the Whitewater at Dunlapville in Union County. In 1872 Arch Kennedy built a model bridge to advertise his product. This model is now housed in the Rush County Historical Society Museum. The bridges were prefabricated in Rushville and constructed on the site with the help of local carpenters and mechanics.

Since 1976 when the new bridge over Sandcreek was built, there has been a persistent, ongoing attempt by local people to preserve the covered bridge as a landmark. Van and Vivian Batterton were instrumental in getting the bridge on the National Register of Historic Places, June 25, 1982. In June, 1999, consulting engineers at Butler, Fairman and Seufert, Inc. observed that "structural damage was observed that should be corrected". Bill Read of Beam, Longest & Neff (an engineering firm) was asked by the County Commissioners to prepare the FA3 application (GDN 6/20/2000). The Restoration Project was started by the Decatur County Commissioners and a group of citizens in 2001. In 2002 the Westport Covered Bridge Renovation and Preservation Project was founded. The estimated cost to renovate the bridge at that time was

\$450,000. The Commissioners had received a grant of \$360,000 from the Indiana Department of Transportation. They needed to raise \$90,000 from local funds. At the beginning fund raising day, May 10, 2002, the Project raised \$15,500 – the Sandcreek High School Alumni (\$500.00) – the Westport High School Alumni (\$5,000.00) – Decatur County Historical Society (\$10,000). The Covered Bridge Festival in 2002 raised \$4,700. Through various fundraisers and donations, the Project was able to raise the \$90,000 by 2003.

Restoration work began on the bridge in January 2004. The members of the Covered Bridge Renovation and Preservation Committee were: Dave Stults, Hugh Miller, Bob Conwell, Diana springmier, Rev. Steve Malone, Judy Rust, Jennifer McNealy, and several other people at various times. The contractor was Milestone Contractors. The

surveying was done by the engineering firm of Beam, Longest & Neff, LLC.



The bridge will be officially rededicated during the Westports of the World meeting August 14, 2004 when the bridge will be open to traffic of less than 4 tons combined weight of passengers and vehicles. It is thanks to the dedication, persistence, and work of the local people particularly

the Covered Bridge Renovation and Preservation Committee and the County Commissioners particularly Tom Menkiedick that the bridge has been preserved and renovated.

Please join the Historical Society of Decatur County in a meeting at the bridge on August the 8th, 2004, 2:00 P.M. to hear from the people involved in the project. Bring your own chairs for the meeting on the bridge. Homemade ice cream will be served later at Bob and Jean Conwell's house at 507 E. Main Street, Westport, Indiana.

The President's Letter

By Diana Springmier

In May, the Society benefited from the local United Fund's Teen Day of Caring when four high school girls representing the three schools in the County and their Greensburg High School biology teacher team leader gave the museum a morning of volunteering. The porches windows and floors were washed and much overgrowth removed from the backyard under Russell Wilhoit's direction as well as the ivy which had climbed to the top of the north wall of the house museum over the years. David Ricke pitched in to trim the honeysuckles overgrowth a few weeks later so 222 North Franklin Street was ready for the Fourth of July guests.

Your Board has hired Thomas Gordon Smith Architects for the carriage house to be constructed behind the museum in 2005 after interviewing representatives from three Indiana firms.

In 1998, Smith stepped down as Chairman of the School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame to devote more time to on-the-site jobs with his firm. He remains on the Notre Dame faculty.

His book, *Classical Architecture: Rule and Invention*, one of numerous publications, was the basis to provide a classical education for students. His current public projects are a carriage house under construction for the Lanier Mansion Historic Site in Madison, Indiana and the design for the Neo-Classical Gallery Suite at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as well as many ecclesiastical projects in the U.S. His publications, research and professional projects are known throughout the world.

... has hired Thomas
Gordon Smith Architects
for the carriage house to
be constructed in 2005 ...

As Thomas Gordon Smith is especially interested in American Architecture of the period of our house museum, evidenced by an article he recently wrote for the Magazine Antiques as well as his most recent book *Vitruvius on Architecture*, we of the board

feel very fortunate to have Smith on board as the Society's architect for the North Franklin Street carriage house.

I hope you visit the outstanding bridal display this summer and are able to take time to attend the August 8th Westport Covered Bridge Rededication followed by an ice cream social at Bob and Jean Conwell's.



Itinerary for trip to Richmond and Fountain City

September 25, 2004

7:30 a.m. – meet at parking lot in front of the Centra Credit Union at the Crossing. We will travel on State Road 3 through Rushville to Dunreidin where we will turn on to the National Road or U.S. 40. From there we will travel through Centerville and Cambridge City to Richmond, all important towns in the 1820's to 1840's when many early settlers of the country were moving from the East to the West or the Plain States.

9:30 a.m. – from Richmond we shall go to Fountain City to see the Levi Coffin House (the Grand Central Station of the Underground Railroad from 1827 to 1847)

11:30 a.m. – from Fountain City, we shall return to a farm north of Richmond and see the Gaar House (a mansion built in 1876 by Abram Gaar, from the Gaar-Scott & Company, a leading manufacturer of threshing machines and steam engines from 1842-1911). The house has been restored with much of its original furniture and decorations.

1:00 p.m. – Lunch at the Olde Richmond Inn.

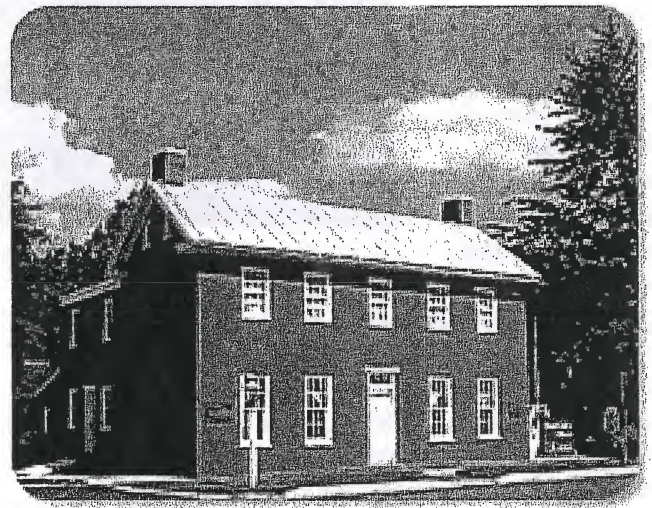
2:00-4:00 p.m. – Wayne County Historical Museum (Housed in the Friends Meeting House). Exhibits include a Village Square (outside), Egyptian mummies, early automobiles, a 1929 Davis Airplane, a Wooton Desk, and many other exhibits relating to Richmond and early Indiana history. We will also visit the Scott House (Victorian house with period rooms and the textile collection for the Wayne County Historical Museum)

6:00 p.m. – Home at last!

The cost per person will be \$25.00. This includes the entry fees and lunch. It **DOES NOT** include transportation. You will need to drive or make arrangements with other people for a ride. We will travel in a convoy so we can arrive approximately at the same time. If you wish to join us on this tour, please send a check for \$25.00 per person made out to the Historical Society of Decatur County to:

Debbie Greiwe
1341 S. Michigan Ave.
Greensburg, IN 47240

Upon receipt of your check, a map and driving instructions, a timetable, and more detailed information about the tour will be sent to you. We will not accept any reservations after the 18th of September. If you have any questions, please call Charity Mitchell (812-663-5141), email cmitc00@hsonline.net or write 234 S. Franklin Street, Greensburg, IN 47240.



Homes, Houses, and Buildings in Decatur County

Compiled by Charity Mitchell

Our homes are an important part of our existence; we spend an enormous amount of time in them, living there, cleaning, redecorating, reworking the electricity, plumbing, roofing, guttering, etc. However most of us like certain aspects of the house and dislike others. Houses are like people in that you love some, get along with some, and avoid others. Throughout the years, houses develop personalities through their history which consists of the building, remodeling, position in the area in which they were built and the people who live or lived in them. Houses appeal to one through their appearance, history, and their connections with people we know or have heard of. There are some which have nostalgic memories of families and friends. There are architectural elements that are just esthetically satisfying like the

"romanesque" arches on the Decatur County Courthouse or the front doorway in the Pleak House on S.R. 421. (*My prejudices are showing!*)

Collecting the history of a house and its inhabitants sounds quite simple until you start to do it. Then the facts become elusive. As a society we would like to collect, preserve, and make available to others histories of buildings and their inhabitants to others.

If you would like to help us with this project, please email, mail, drop by the museum with a history of your house or houses where you have lived or have an interest in. Please include a photograph or photographs at different times, a floor plan (descriptive or drawn), dates on building and remodeling and information on the people who lived there when and any stories connected with the house.

We are starting with a history of the house at 131 W. First Street written by Sara S. Picker.

The House on First Street, Lot 6 Hamilton's

In 1921 my grandparents Londa and Minnie Smiley Wright moved from a farm north of Westport to a residence at 131 W. First Street, Greensburg, Indiana. The family occupied that home until 1987. I visited them and lived there while I attended Greensburg High School, 1933.

The story was told that the house was moved from N. Broadway, the site of the Y.M.C.A., to 131 W. First St. Information on the house stated it was built in 1868, 4 rooms first floor, 3 bedrooms 2nd floor.

In the Decatur County History, 1984, Margaret Wright Meek states that, "the house was moved from the present site of the Y.M.C.A. in 1915," page 306.



Research in Harding, The History of Decatur County Indiana, 1915 page #177 and page #562.

The site for the YMCA was purchased from Drs. Kercheval and White with money from a gift of one man, Nelson Mourey, who decided to build and endow a building for his native city. July 30, 1914. Full name: Dr. Clarence Fay Kercheval.

I visited the house in 2001, during a Re/Max "Open House" to see how it had been modernized. Because of

its solid construction not much could be changed in the floor plan. The large rooms with high ceilings and tall windows remained. I found my bedroom upstairs, a bathroom had been added. The treacherous steep steps to the basement with a turn at the bottom, had not been altered.

I came away satisfied that I had seen the house and it was intact. I still had my memories and I felt good. It was home for 66 years.

—Sara Wright Picker

If you have information on buildings in Decatur County that you'd like to share, please send your information to:

Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

P.O. Box #163

Greensburg, Ind. 47240

Att'n: Charity Mitchell

Email address: DecaturCountyHistoricalSociety@ffsg.net

or drop it by the house at 222 N. Franklin Street (Saturday or Sunday, 1-4 p.m.)



Historical Society of Decatur County Events Calendar July – December 2004

Ongoing through September 30
“Bevy of Brides” wedding exhibit

August 7 – Wedding reception at the Museum for the
“Bevy of Brides” exhibit

August 8 – Rededication of the Westport Covered Bridge
Meeting at the Covered Bridge, 2:00 P.M. PLEASE BRING
FOLDING CHAIRS for this meeting. Home made ice
cream will be served after the meeting at Bob Conwell's
home, 507 E. Main St., Westport

September 25 – Trip to Richmond, Indiana (see page 3)

December 12 Christmas Open House and Exhibit

*All events and dates are subject to change, please contact Charity Mitchell at (812)663-5141
or cmitc00@hsonline.net or Helen Hamilton (812)663-8323 to verify information*

Silver Anniversary for Tree City Fall Festival

Contributed by: Bob Bostic, Tree City Fall Festival President

Look for the silver lining in the 2004 Tree City Fall Festival this September 17, 18 & 19 on historic Tower Tree Square in downtown Greensburg!

It was 25 years ago when founders Herb Kohler, a prominent local attorney and former Indiana State Representative, David Begley, a successful local insurance agent, and Art Powers, publisher of the local newspaper, saw their idea become a reality. They had researched other area festivals and convinced the local Chamber of Commerce to launch a similar project in Greensburg.

Herb Kohler took responsibility and in 1979 formed a volunteer committee, brought a three-ring circus to town, put together a huge parade and the creation of the Tree City Fall Festival resulted. This fall, the committee will celebrate its 25th Silver Anniversary.

The committee has a strong group of community leaders who continue to plan, promote and organize the festival each year, following the lead of the community founders. Two members have helped in all 25 festivals and the challenge to provide good entertainment, a gala parade, and a weekend of family oriented activities remains the mission.

The Tree City Fall Festival has been held in the historic downtown district each year, showcasing the famous Tee on the Courthouse Tower as the centerpiece and traditional icon of the community. The world famous Tree is a symbol of strength that continues to grow from the original roots of its base in the top of the Decatur County Courthouse, much like the strength of our city and county government boards that continue to administer the regulations, policies and laws established by our community forefathers.

The festival has been a two-day event, a 10-day event covering two weekends and now a three-day event for the past decade. Entertainment has evolved from local talent performing on the bed of a farm implement truck to the spacious 30x40 donated tent stage now used for nationally known musical performers.

The festival has always offered the entertainment free to the public because the committee has always wanted to give our local citizens top quality performances without charge so that everyone could attend.

The festival has had the financial help of many businesses, industry, foundations and individuals to make that purpose a reality. Greensburg is comprised of a wide variety of workers who strive to raise healthy families on limited budgets and we do not want them to miss anything because of family financial constraints.

Founding chairman Herb Kohler has passed away and one of the highlights of each festival is the giant parade held on a Saturday morning and is now named the Herb Kohler Memorial Parade. Co-founding members David Begley and Art Powers have been invited to be Parade Marshals of the 2004 Silver Anniversary parade this fall.

Citizens of Greensburg and Decatur County, and Festival guests, have an opportunity to see memorabilia and historic items that trace our community heritage in the Historical Society of Decatur County Museum. Special hours are offered during each annual festival.

Citizens and guests will also be able to see a glimpse of the past 25 years in the 2004 Tree City Fall Festival as committee officials are asking individuals, clubs and organizations, sororities, schools and individuals to depict their past quarter-century of progress in either the parade, at a special booth or in special presentations this fall.

It has been music that has increased the attendance over the weekend event. In 2003, officials estimated 10,000 persons attended throughout the festival. Nationally known musicians "The Coasters," "The Drifters" and "The Platters" drew the largest crowd for an outdoor concert in the history of the festival in 2003.

"Grass Roots" is the headline entertainment slated for the 25th anniversary this September, and perhaps even their name is a reminder of the community roots which is kept alive with each passing year.

There is historic value in the Tree City Fall Festival.



A Brief History of Burney

Reviewed by *Bulletin* editor George Granholt



"In southeastern Indiana, near the western boundary of Decatur County in Clay Township, sits an unincorporated village named Burney, population 254."

These words preface an article by Stephen J. Jay in the Spring 2004 issue of *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* in which the author relates the fascinating life of Leroy Burney, whose great-grandfather, Samuel M. Burney, donated the land for a Big Four Railroad station. According to the author, Leroy, born in Burney, Indiana, "began a life's journey that would lead him to the pinnacles of government service as U.S. Surgeon General and to prominence on the world stage of international health."

After graduating from Indiana University with a medical degree and interning at the Merchant Marine hospital in Chicago, Burney received a Rockefeller Foundation Scholarship at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health. Leroy Burney was on his way to professional service and success.

The article notes that Burney assessed his "three great loves in life [as] public health, his family and Indiana." Among the notable events in Burney's career was his announcement in 1957 of the link between smoking and lung cancer.

Of course this finding had enormous repercussions at the time and prompted one of the most significant social and economic changes in our nation's history.

Jay recounts Leroy Burney's life as, in the words of U.S. Senator Homer Capehart, that of "a true son of Hoosier soil." Ironically, Jay notes that Burney is buried next to another well-known Hoosier, former Vice-President Thomas Marshall, who said, "What this country needs is a good five-cent cigar."

Stephen Jay's article is a positive assessment of a significant Hoosier who had his roots in Decatur County. The author notes a number of recognizable Decatur County family names in Leroy's lineage, and there are several photographs of locales familiar to Decatur County residents. The editor highly recommends Jay's article as a significant addition to Indiana lore, and one of special interest to our county's residents.

Bibliography:

Jay, Stephen J., "Leroy E. Burney — A Hoosier Pioneer in Public Health"
Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History
Spring 2004, pps. 17-25
Indiana Historical Society

1924

ST. PAUL

Charles Wise got his hand badly cut Wednesday while at the home of Glen Townsend, south of town. Dr. Turner had to take several stitches to close the wound.

The ladies of the M. E. church will give the play at the Old Maids' Convention at Rushville Thursday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Orla Guess of Greensburg spent Sunday with Mr. Guess's mother, Mrs. Ellen Guess.

Vernon Evans of New Point is spending the week with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Hord Evans.

Just a Reminder

Black Hawk Corn Drill and
Bean Attachment.

Soy Bean

Nisco Spreader and repairs.
Poultry netting and fence.
Screen wire and screen doors.
Lawnmowers: 4-blade ball bearing
self-sharpening, \$10; 5-
blade ball bearing, triple gear,
\$20. Lawn hose cut any length
you want.

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This week 60¢

Decatur County
MERCANTILE CO.

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"Pinehurst"

Chicken
Dinner's
\$1.00

Catering to motor parties. Reservations. Spring fry, \$1.50.
"Where quality never varies."
Greensburg, Ind. See guide post,
1 mile west on Columbus pike.
Phone 3210-M.

Bio Bit

"The first white man to take up his abode in Adams Township is believed to have been John Gullion."

Harding's History of Decatur County, Indiana describes in a short biographical note the arrival of one John Gullion, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, who built a "shanty" above Big Flat Rock River in the fall of 1818. He later moved his family to a location where the Michigan Road intersected with the river, and there he built his permanent residence. Gullion is characterized as being "... perfectly irrepressible and uncontrollable in battle." It seems Mr. Gullion was expressing an early penchant for Decatur County individuality. His unmarked grave is noted in the *History* as located "... on the Spillman farm near Shiloh."

Bibliography:

Harding, Lewis. Editor, *History of Decatur County, Indiana*, B. F. Bowen & Co. Indianapolis, Indiana 1915

Member Bill Ford Recognized

The following is a digest of an article by Jim Cummings which appeared in the *Greensburg Daily News* on June 14, 2004.

A long-time and faithful member of the Historical Society, Bill Ford, was honored by Senator Richard Lugar on June 12 of this year. Bill, a veteran of the U.S. Navy in World War II, received a citation which reads, William Ford "... in recognition of your dedicated service to your community and with appreciation for your invaluable contribution to the State of Indiana ..." Along with State Representative Cleo Duncan, Senator Lugar paid honor to Bill as one whose "... diligent work [has kept alive] many of these veterans' sacrifices ..." Rep. Duncan, in her remarks, said, "We stand here free to enjoy our lives, family and friends because of the sacrifices our veterans made. I can't tell you how glad I am Bill has made such an effort to remember all of them. Local Veterans' Service Officer, Harold Sample, noted that "... not another Service Office in the state has the collection we have ... I am so grateful for all of Bill's work."

The Decatur County Historical Society also recognizes Bill's work, not only for the veterans of Decatur County and Indiana, but to his devotion to the Society's mission of historical preservation in general. We can learn more than one lesson from Bill Ford.

Deadlines for Contributions

Have something to contribute to *The Bulletin*? The Editor is accepting stories, ideas, pictures and /or comments! Please send them to the Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, Indiana 47240. Deadlines for submission are September 12 for the Fall issue and November 12 for the Winter issue. All contributions are most welcome!

2004 Donations to the Decatur County Historical Society Museum

ITEMS

DONOR

Books, Papers, Audiocassettes

- Audiocassette of the Ionian Sonata written by Dr. Carl Overpeck in memory of his mother Iona Overpeck
Carl Overpeck
- Decatur County Sheriff's Road Directory (1964)
Ron Bewley
- The History of Boy Scouts in Decatur County by Michael Martin
Michael Martin

Magazines

- Hearth and Home, October, September, 1925, Ladies Home Journal, Nov. 1944, People's Popular Monthly, September 1925, Prairie Farmer (Centennial no. 1841-1941)
Cecil Gorbett

Newspapers

- Greensburg Daily News Bicentennial issues
Thelma Meece
- Greensburg Daily News 1914 newspapers with articles of historic interest
Cecil Gorbett
- Greensburg Daily News centennial ed., June 8, 1959 with information on the history of sports in Decatur County
Leon and Martha McCammon
- Indianapolis newspapers recording significant events from 1913 to 1952
Cecil Gorbett
- Newspaper articles about the Dalton Gang
Thelma Meece
- Newspapers with headlines from World War II and later.
Ray Beagle
- Newspapers concerning World War II items about his service during the war
Alfred Henningsen

Clothing And Accessories

- FFA jacket belonging to Lewis Hunter (1950's)
Margaret Hunter
- 2 pairs of children's shoes (19th century)
Margaret Hunter
- Woman's dress (blue velvet) early 20th century
Mrs. Ivan Johnson

Military Clothing

- World War II Army Uniform
Mrs. Ruth Ann Shake

More 2004 Donations

ITEMS

DONOR

Miscellaneous items

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camera (Box style from the 1930's or early 1940's • Eye glasses, 6 pairs (19th century) • Farm work sleigh, owned by John Shelhorn and used in the 19th century • Greensburg Standard Advertisement, 1890, in frame • Hat stretcher • Stuffed toys (5) • Tile from the Tree Theater Toy Box • Tree City Fall Festival (Key to city) boxed plaque from the 1980's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don Barker Margaret Hunter John L. Shelhorn Russell Wilhoit Margaret Hunter Charles Gilliland Russell Wilhoit Charles Gilliland Russell Wilhoit |
|---|---|

Photographs

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actors at the K. of P. Theater, 1912 • Bentley Family Reunion picture (1920-1930?) • Eli and Elizabeth Shake in front of Log Cabin (1880-1900?) Large photograph in frame • Greensburg House at 131 W. 1st Street with a history of the house • John and Rose Shelhorn (1919) • McGee Reunion picture (1919) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Margaret Hunter Russell Wilhoit Mrs. Ruth Ann Shake Sara Wright Picker Mrs. Kimberly Fuentes Russell Wilhoit |
|---|---|

Sports Clothing and Equipment

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseball bat • Baseball catcher's mask (1950's) • Baseball catcher's mitt (1950's) • Baseball fielder's glove (1950's) • Baseball shoes (1937-1948) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russell Wilhoit Joe Andrew Joe Andrew Joe Andrew Robert Narwold |
|---|---|

Prices One Hundred Years Ago (1904)

S. P. MINEAR.
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S. P. MINEAR & CO.

THE BIG STORE.

Petticoat Special.

Fine mercerized petticoats, our 1.50 quality.....	98c
Fine mercerized petticoats, our 1.00 quality.....	69c
Fine gingham petticoats, our 1.00 quality.....	75c

A Look Back . . .

1914

STRAND THEATRE (1934)

TONIGHT AND SATURDAY



Also Buck Jones in "Ghost City." Also Cartoon. 10c & 15c

Sunday, Monday and Tuesday
**A Double Who
Doubled Too Well**

So well did the masquerader whom
he hired to double for him perform
that he himself was branded an
Impostor...even by his wife
and mistress!



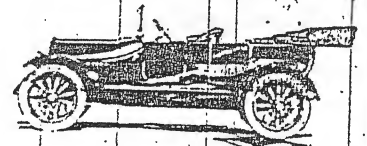
THE GREAT STUDEBAKER CAR

The Studebaker Four, \$1050.

A "Four" With a Reason.

This Studebaker FOUR makes vivid and concrete our loyalty to the four-cylinder motor car, and our belief in its future.

It is a car which, in design, workmanship and materials, embodies every excellence we know how to put into it. It is a car that is light, handy and simple. It is a five-passenger car. Its equipment omits nothing that can add to comfort or convenience. Its long-stroke motor combines wonderful power with miles-per-gallon efficiency of the highest order. And the price of this beautiful "full-jeweled" Studebaker FOUR is but \$1050.



THE Studebaker SIX

The Modern "Big Car"



Once motordom considered four cylinders adequate to any task. Later the world agreed on the superiority of "Sixes"—for heavy duty—but regretted that six cylinders and \$5000 were so nearly synonymous. Now—thanks to the \$1575 Studebaker SIX—no well-informed buyer who wants a car of seven-passenger capacity considers anything but a "Six." It is the lowest-priced SIX on the market. It is a large, capable, seven-passenger SIX. It is a SIX built completely in the shops of Studebaker, the largest manufacturer of "Sixes" in the world.

HARLAN OVERLEESE

Agent for Greensburg and Decatur
County

Office Hamilton Block

North Franklin St.

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Corresponding & Recording Secretary: Susan Blanton
Membership Secretary: Rheadawn Metz
Treasurer: Debbie Griewe

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The Bulletin

The Historical Society of Decatur County
Greensburg, Indiana

Fall/Winter 2004

"History doesn't repeat
itself; it does remind us
of ourselves."

— Anonymous

The story of St. Paul

By Bob Mitchell

It is easy to get carried away thinking the pioneers of Decatur and Shelby Counties were beset by Indians, bears and wolves in a dense unpopulated wilderness. Not so. After the St. Mary's Treaty of 1818 the lands we now enjoy were surveyed in 1819, and on the first Monday of October 1820 the land office at Brookville was opened for the purchase of land. John Shelhorn, Johnathon Paul, and Arthur Major were the first to claim land on Flat Rock River in Decatur and Shelby Counties. (The "counties" were not actually created until 1822.)

Whether these men knew each other or not we don't know, but since their purchases were within a few days and their claims were nearly adjoining, it is safe to say they were acquainted.

Perhaps they traveled together.

There were settlers living in the area, and both Major and Shelhorn planned towns on their property called Morven and Rockville. Those two settlements eventually failed. Johnathon Paul, however, saw the need for a gristmill and built the first one known to be in the area. He built a small, one room log cabin as his first residence, building a second when the first burned. Just a few years later he had a substantial house built on the hill above his mill. That house, built by J. Daniel French, with bricks made on the scene, is still standing and occupied.

Johnathon built the one-room log cabin and a hand cranked grist mill on the little stream known as "Bull Creek" and hence the settlement "Bull Town." That soon was changed to "Paul Town."

The fertile land, coupled with the industries created by the entrepreneurship of Johnathon's son, John, quickly attracted many settlers. John built a larger grist mill powered by the flow of "Bull" Creek. That name soon became "Mill Creek." He added a sluiceway to supply more water to his grist and flour mill and started a woolen mill and a sawmill.

One of the most important industries was begun by James Scanlan who saw the value of the natural

limestone and, with Theadore Eck and son Joseph, began to quarry both for building stone and for the burning of lime. That work became the life blood of Paul Town.

By 1854 business was booming in Paul Town. The quarries had attracted many workers, who in turn created a need for the necessary businesses to sustain the economy. John Paul created a plot of 9 blocks. Fifty-nine lots became the nucleus of a town, and St. Paul was born. The origin of the name is unknown, but we can surmise that it came from the influence of the many German Lutherans and Irish Catholics who then lived there. In the same year, he obtained a government post office.

The fledging but promising stone business led to a change in the route of a railroad which had already begun to take shape through St. Omar. The change was a good one for both the railroad and St. Paul, as the railroad meant more employment for the area. For years, the quarries supplied several hundred car-loads of stone a week.

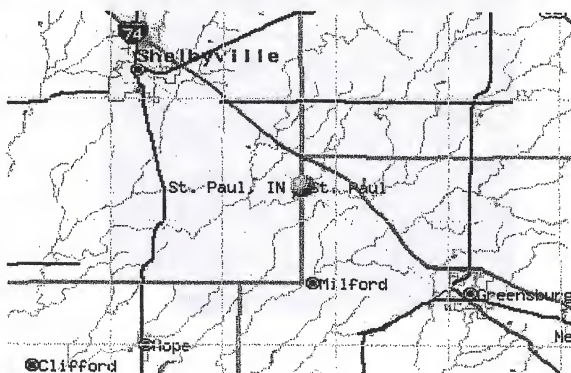
The town was soon expanded with the addition of Lord, Avery, Stevens, Phillips, and Conger streets. Dorsey Street, partly in Shelby county, was also added. John himself, joined by Higgins and Eck, plotted more lots. He, also, in partnership with his son-in-law, Erastus Floyd, developed several more improvements to

the mix.

All this activity accelerated the growth of the settlement both in industry and population. In the ensuing years, St. Paul grew to be a metropolis that had as many as sixty business and professional establishments — such as seven grocery stores, eight dry goods stores, three restaurants, four blacksmith shops, five doctors, three lawyers and of course, "uncounted" saloons.

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The area alone

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A Wedding Story

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Editors Note: This story was written by Sara "Sally" Wright Picker for the June 2004 Bridal Exhibit at the Decatur County Historical Museum. Sara's wedding going away suit was to be on display. She wrote this in May before the June exhibit at the age of eighty-seven years.

There was a lot happening in 1942. U.S. A. was at war with the Japanese and the Germans. The men that went in for a year were now in service for the duration. In November 1941 I had a diamond on my finger, left hand. We had our lots and a house under construction. We were to be married when it was finished. Along came the war, December 7, Pearl Harbor and all material was frozen, no house. That "hole in the ground" was to remain for the duration (1946).

1942 - Spring came and we had no wedding date so on Easter I wore the new black dress and hat.

April 4, 1942, Saturday night, we were out with three couples, all married, at the Elks Club. They decided we should be married the following Saturday night in their presence. A contract was drawn up and signed by all present including Sally and Ray. It was discussed over the week-end. Why not!!!

Monday - with my professional contacts, the blood was drawn and hand carried to the lab so we could get the report in time to go to the court house. I didn't have a dress! I wasn't going to wear the new one because it was black. The dress I found was blue and white flannel with a blue hat. The time, the place and the date was set for Friday, April 10, 1942, 7:30 p.m. The bride and the groom to be worked that day as did the wedding party and most of the guests.

The groom saw the bride before the wedding because I dressed at the nurse's residence and he picked me up and took me to Letts, Mt. Aerie Baptist Church. The church was filled with family and friends, the three couples that wrote the contract. With the help of my mother all arrangements were made, the invitations were verbal.

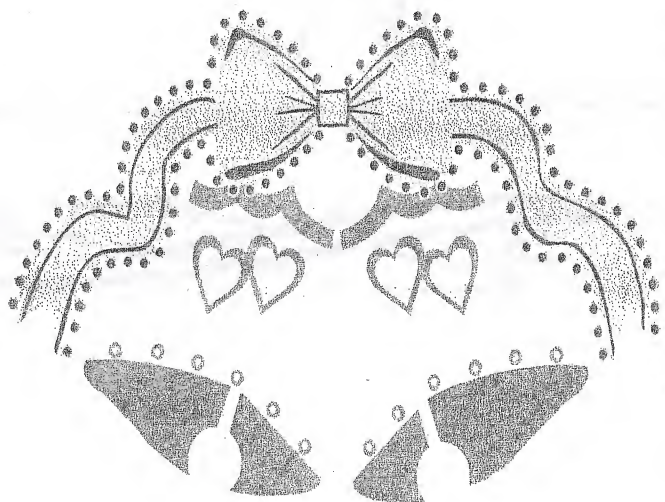
I was given in marriage by my father, Arthur Wright. My roommate, Mabel Oak, was maid of honor. Best man Chas Atkinson was a friend of Ray's. Music was provided by my sister Willa Wright. I know she sang "Because" accompanied by my childhood friend Faith Davis. Rev. Robert Marlett lived next door to my parents.

There was no rehearsal. We were married. We met our guests in the vestibule.

No reception was planned and my mother never had time to think of one. Some of our friends came to my parent's home in Letts where I changed into the new black dress, hat and coat. We had the shower of rice as we left for our honeymoon, the Brown Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky, on a long week-end (three days).

On our stay in Louisville we visited an officer friend stationed at Fort Knox. When the war was over and we all returned to Columbus that friend, Capt. Willis Repp, the contractor, finished the house on top of that "hole in the ground".

The dress was tailor-made by Ogden Utah Tailoring Mills, Ogden, Utah. A representative called on working women in business and professionals. They had popular styles, colors and fabrics. Over time I had two dresses, a coat and a suit tailored that I wore during the war. I was measured and all fit perfectly. (I found recorded in 1941 I paid \$31.65 for the coat.)



The Flatrock River in *Outdoor Indiana*

Reviewed by *Bulletin* editor George Granholt

Steve Polston, Senior Editor of *Outdoor Indiana*, has a pictorial essay in the July/August '04 edition of the magazine which provides excellent coverage of the Flatrock River. The article discusses the geological characteristics of the waterway, of course, but the article's main focus is on the people and places along the river in Rush, Decatur, and Shelby counties.

The article begins with the author's interview of Bob Mitchell, long-time resident of St. Paul, and a familiar figure to many of us in the Historical Society. Polston writes that Bob, "... Does not want his picture taken." However, the author emphasizes that "... People like Bob Mitchell reflect the river and the town."

Described as the "vigorous historian of St. Paul," Polston notes that Bob, a classmate of President Ronald Reagan at Eureka College, Illinois, maintains the records kept by the former town historian, Bill Hurst, who published a centenary book about the town in 1952. Bob is still active in town affairs, and has been a long-time member of the St. Paul Kiwanis Club.

Also discussed in the article are St. Paul native Bill Pike and his wife, Gladys. Polston describes their marriage as "truly one of paint and nails," because their homestead consists of refurbished log cabins and barns from the Hope, Indiana area.

Bill says his cultural hero is PBS' Norm Abrams, whom he met and from whom he received a signed plaque in the shape of Indiana. The author says of the Pikes, "Living where they do is important to the Pikes, who are as aware of local history as their friend, Bob Mitchell."

The Pike's son, Tom, and daughter-in-law, Patty, are also mentioned in the article in connection with the younger Pike's sign shop, which is literally a museum of significant Hoosier memorabilia.

Space prohibits a more lengthy discussion of the people and places mentioned in Polston's essay. The editor urges you to get the article and read it. You will find a fascinating account of people you know and places you are familiar with. The photographs are exceptional, and the

writing lucid. Residents of Decatur, Shelby, and Rush counties can be pleased that our area has received state-wide notoriety.

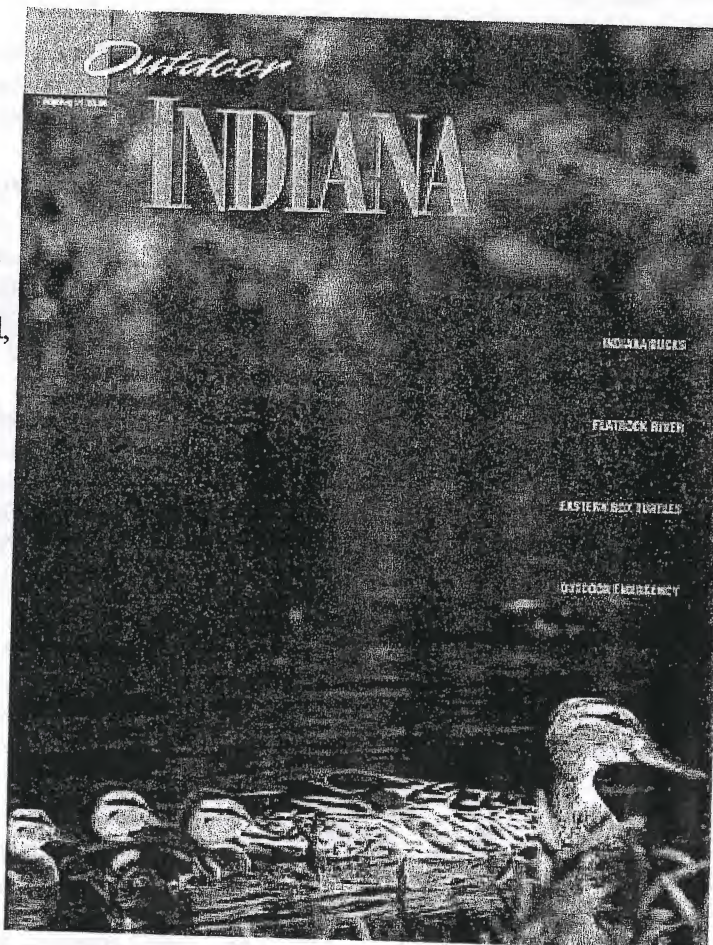
Bibliography

Polston, Steve

Flatrock

Outdoor Indiana, July/August, '04

Indiana Department of Natural Resources



Bio Bit — Rose McConnell Long

Editor's Note: Early in August, I came across the name of the wife of Governor Huey Long of Louisiana, the famous (infamous) "Kingfish" of the Bayou State in the early 1930's. In idly checking the Internet Site for the Senatorial biographies, I saw the name of Rose McConnell Long. Not remembering, if I ever knew, that this individual had served in the U.S. Senate, I glanced at the rest of the short biographical reference: "Rose McConnell Long, wife of Huey Long . . . born in Greensburg, Decatur County, Indiana, in 1892." Intrigued by this revelation, I set out to find out more about Rose McConnell Long. After a week or so of minor success, I finally called Pat Smith, figuring that if anyone could give me some information, Pat could. Of course, I was not disappointed, so here is Pat's account from an article she wrote about four years ago . . . and which I apparently missed. Thank you, Pat!

When Rose McConnell was born near Turner's Quarry on SW60, her parents couldn't have imagined what a dramatic life she would lead or the part she was destined to play in American history.

Rose was born on April 8, 1892 to Peter and Armitage "Sally" Billieu McConnell. Sally was from Thibodaux, Louisiana. Peter was from Decatur County and was living near Turner's Quarry. Peter had been married and had a daughter from that marriage who became the first wife of Dr. C. A. Weaver of Milroy.

How Peter and Sally met was recorded in a journal of memories written by Elizabeth Robbins Davis and loaned to me by Neil McCammon. Elizabeth Davis wrote in her journal of the need for her family to find a carpenter for a home her father was building. She wrote: "There was at that time a man in Greensburg, Peter McConnell, who was a good carpenter. He took the job with his brothers Henry and William and by spring they were ready to begin work."

"That was also the summer that cousin Sally Billieu came from Louisiana to make her home with Grandpa Miller. He met her train at Westport and stopped with her on his way home. I was playing around the new house when the word came that cousin Sally was there. We children all rushed out to see her and she was very friendly, though my mother scolded us so because we were very dirty.

"The McConnells did several pieces of work in the neighborhood. They built a big barn for Grandpa Miller and the Mapleton Church. Peter McConnell later married Sally Billieu and the couple had two children — Rose and Gilman McConnell.

For a few years the family moved to Greensburg and lived on East Central Avenue. When Rose was about nine years old, in 1901,

the family moved to Shreveport, Louisiana. Gilman became a veterinarian in Louisiana and Rose attended public schools and secretarial school.

Rose met Huey Long while he was selling vegetable oil door to door. As part of the promotion for the product, he conducted a cake-baking contest in Shreveport. The winner of that contest was Rose McConnell. She married Huey Long on April 12, 1913. They had three children.

Huey Long's life and death has been the subject of more books, movies and TV programs than any other politician who didn't become President of the United States. President of the U.S. was what Huey was aiming for when he was assassinated in September, 1935.

Note: Some of the best known books and movies include *All the Kings Men* by Robert Penn Warren (1949) and the movie of the same name; *Huey Long* by T. Harry Williams (1969); *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon* by John K. Fineran (1986); *The Kingfish of Louisiana* by Suzanne LeVert (1995); the TV documentary by Ken Burns and at least two books by Long himself, *Every Man a King* (1934) and *My First Days in the White House* (1934, reprinted 1972). If those don't interest you there are dozens more.

Long was apparently shot by Dr. Carl A. Weiss who, in turn, was shot by Long's bodyguards. I say "apparently" because there is still controversy about who shot him. Some believe that one of Long's bodyguards shot him by mistake as he was trying to shoot the shooter. Others believe that a bodyguard shot him on purpose. There was always controversy about anything in which Long was involved, even getting shot..

(continued on next page)



More about Rose . . .

Long's political influence wasn't over after his death. The Long family remained important in the state. Huey's brother, Earl, served three terms as governor of Louisiana and Russell, son of Huey and Rose, was a member of the U.S. Senate from 1948 until his retirement in 1986.

Rose's ties to Decatur County were strong and she had relatives here whom she visited many times before she died in 1970. On one occasion captured by newsmen, she was overcome by nostalgia and took off her shoes so she could wade in Sand Creek as she had done when she was a child. During most of her visits she stayed with her cousin, Elizabeth (Mrs. Clifford) Davis, 1880-1966) of Letts.

After Huey's death Rose served part of his term in the Senate and then retired to private life at her main residence in Shreveport. She died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. O. W. McFarland in Boulder, Colorado, May 27, 1970.

RENEW your membership today!

Dues are payable January 1 each year! Don't miss out on important member benefits such as receiving The Bulletin. Individual membership is \$10, couples are \$15 and contributing membership is \$30. Please make your checks payable to the Historical Society of Decatur County. Send the check with this form to:

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The Bulletin

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"History doesn't repeat
itself; it does remind us
of ourselves."

— Anonymous

The story of St. Paul

By Bob Mitchell

It is easy to get carried away thinking the pioneers of Decatur and Shelby Counties were beset by Indians, bears and wolves in a dense unpopulated wilderness. Not so. After the St. Mary's Treaty of 1818 the lands we now enjoy were surveyed in 1819, and on the first Monday of October 1820 the land office at Brookville was opened for the purchase of land. John Shelhorn, Johnathon Paul, and Arthur Major were the first to claim land on Flat Rock River in Decatur and Shelby Counties. (The "counties" were not actually created until 1822.)

Whether these men knew each other or not we don't know, but since their purchases were within a few days and their claims were nearly adjoining, it is safe to say they were acquainted. Perhaps they traveled together.

There were settlers living in the area, and both Major and Shelhorn planned towns on their property called Morven and Rockville. Those two settlements eventually failed. Johnathon Paul, however, saw the need for a gristmill and built the first one known to be in the area. He built a small, one room log cabin as his first residence, building a second when the first burned. Just a few years later he had a substantial house built on the hill above his mill. That house, built by J. Daniel French, with bricks made on the scene, is still standing and occupied.

Johnathon built the one-room log cabin and a hand cranked grist mill on the little stream known as "Bull Creek" and hence the settlement "Bull Town." That soon was changed to "Paul Town."

The fertile land, coupled with the industries created by the entrepreneurship of Johnathon's son, John, quickly attracted many settlers. John built a larger grist mill powered by the flow of "Bull" Creek. That name soon became "Mill Creek." He added a sluiceway to supply more water to his grist and flour mill and started a woolen mill and a sawmill.

One of the most important industries was begun by James Scanlan who saw the value of the natural

limestone and, with Theodore Eck and son Joseph, began to quarry both for building stone and for the burning of lime. That work became the life blood of Paul Town.

By 1854 business was booming in Paul Town. The quarries had attracted many workers, who in turn created a need for the necessary businesses to sustain the economy. John Paul created a plot of 9 blocks. Fifty-nine lots became the nucleus of a town, and St. Paul was born. The origin of the name is unknown, but we can surmise that it came from the influence of the many German Lutherans and Irish Catholics who then lived there. In the same year, he obtained a government post office.

The fledging but promising stone business led to a change in the route of a railroad which had already begun to take shape through St. Omar. The change was a good one for both the railroad and St. Paul, as the railroad meant more employment for the area. For years, the quarries supplied several hundred car-loads of stone a week.

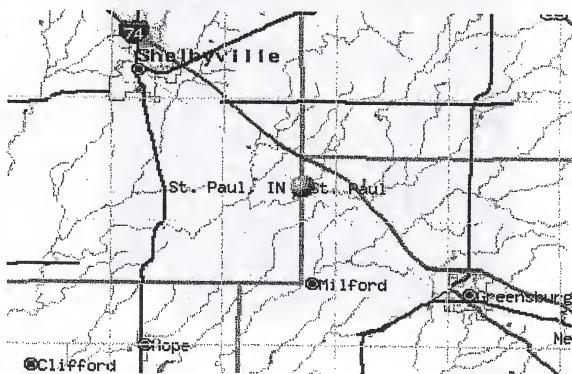
The town was soon expanded with the addition of Lord, Avery, Stevens, Phillips, and Conger streets. Dorsey Street, partly in Shelby county, was also added. John himself, joined by Higgins and Eck, plotted more lots. He, also, in partnership with his son-in-law, Erastus Floyd, developed several more improvements to

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All this activity accelerated the growth of the settlement both in industry and population. In the ensuing years, St. Paul grew to be a metropolis that had as many as sixty business and professional establishments — such as seven grocery stores, eight dry goods stores, three restaurants, four blacksmith shops, five doctors, three lawyers and of course, "uncounted" saloons.

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The groom saw the bride before the wedding because I dressed at the nurse's residence and he picked me up and took me to Letts, Mt. Aerie Baptist Church. The church was filled with family and friends, the three couples that wrote the contract. With the help of my mother all arrangements were made, the invitations were verbal.

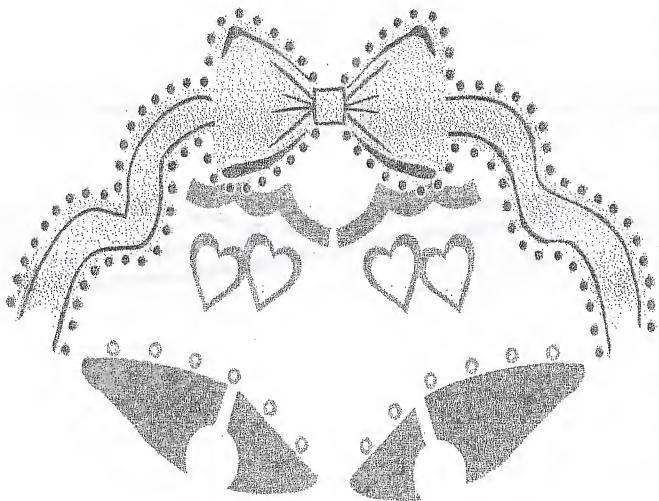
I was given in marriage by my father, Arthur Wright. My roommate, Mabel Oak, was maid of honor. Best man Chas Atkinson was a friend of Ray's. Music was provided by my sister Willa Wright. I know she sang "Because" accompanied by my childhood friend Faith Davis. Rev. Robert Marlett lived next door to my parents.

There was no rehearsal. We were married. We met our guests in the vestibule.

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The Flatrock River in *Outdoor Indiana*

Reviewed by *Bulletin* editor George Granholt

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The article begins with the author's interview of Bob Mitchell, long-time resident of St. Paul, and a familiar figure to many of us in the Historical Society. Polston writes that Bob, "... Does not want his picture taken." However, the author emphasizes that "... People like Bob Mitchell reflect the river and the town."

Described as the "vigorous historian of St. Paul," Polston notes that Bob, a classmate of President Ronald Reagan at Eureka College, Illinois, maintains the records kept by the former town historian, Bill Hurst, who published a centenary book about the town in 1952. Bob is still active in town affairs, and has been a long-time member of the St. Paul Kiwanis Club.

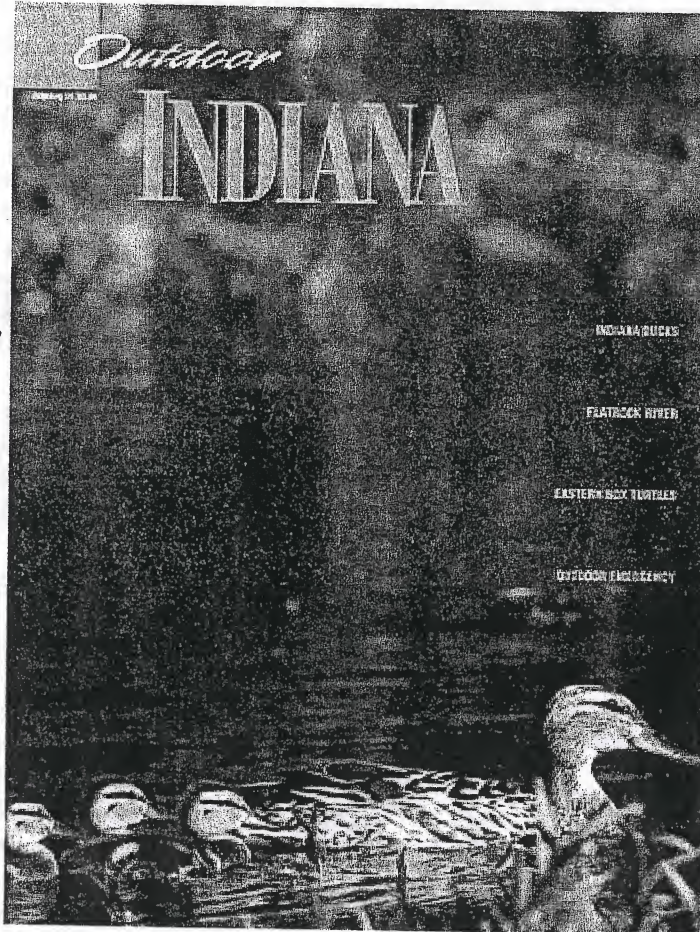
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Space prohibits a more lengthy discussion of the people and places mentioned in Polston's essay. The editor urges you to get the article and read it. You will find a fascinating account of people you know and places you are familiar with. The photographs are exceptional, and the

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Outdoor Indiana, July/August, '04
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Bio Bit — Rose McConnell Long

Editor's Note: Early in August, I came across the name of the wife of Governor Huey Long of Louisiana, the famous (infamous) "Kingfish" of the Bayou State in the early 1930's. In idly checking the Internet Site for the Senatorial biographies, I saw the name of Rose McConnell Long. Not remembering, if I ever knew, that this individual had served in the U.S. Senate, I glanced at the rest of the short biographical reference: "Rose McConnell Long, wife of Huey Long . . . born in Greensburg, Decatur County, Indiana, in 1892." Intrigued by this revelation, I set out to find out more about Rose McConnell Long. After a week or so of minor success, I finally called Pat Smith, figuring that if anyone could give me some information, Pat could. Of course, I was not disappointed, so here is Pat's account from an article she wrote about four years ago . . . and which I apparently missed. Thank you, Pat!

When Rose McConnell was born near Turner's Quarry on SW60, her parents couldn't have imagined what a dramatic life she would lead or the part she was destined to play in American history.

Rose was born on April 8, 1892 to Peter and Armitage "Sally" Billieu McConnell. Sally was from Thibodaux, Louisiana. Peter was from Decatur County and was living near Turner's Quarry. Peter had been married and had a daughter from that marriage who became the first wife of Dr. C. A. Weaver of Milroy.

How Peter and Sally met was recorded in a journal of memories written by Elizabeth Robbins Davis and loaned to me by Neil McCammon. Elizabeth Davis wrote in her journal of the need for her family to find a carpenter for a home her father was building. She wrote: "There was at that time a man in Greensburg, Peter McConnell, who was a good carpenter. He took the job with his brothers Henry and William and by spring they were ready to begin work."

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"The McConnells did several pieces of work in the neighborhood. They built a big barn for Grandpa Miller and the Mapleton Church. Peter McConnell later married Sally Billieu and the couple had two children — Rose and Gilman McConnell.

For a few years the family moved to Greensburg and lived on East Central Avenue. When Rose was about nine years old, in 1901,

the family moved to Shreveport, Louisiana. Gilman became a veterinarian in Louisiana and Rose attended public schools and secretarial school.

Rose met Huey Long while he was selling vegetable oil door to door. As part of the promotion for the product, he conducted a cake-baking contest in Shreveport. The winner of that contest was Rose McConnell. She married Huey Long on April 12, 1913. They had three children.

Huey Long's life and death has been the subject of more books, movies and TV programs than any other politician who didn't become President of the United States. President of the U.S. was what Huey was aiming for when he was assassinated in September, 1935.

Note: Some of the best known books and movies include *All the Kings Men* by Robert Penn Warren (1949) and the movie of the same name; *Huey Long* by T. Harry Williams (1969); *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon* by John K. Fineran (1986); *The Kingfish of Louisiana* by Suzanne LeVert (1995); the TV documentary by Ken Burns and at least two books by Long himself, *Every Man a King* (1934) and *My First Days in the White House* (1934, reprinted 1972). If those don't interest you there are dozens more.

Long was apparently shot by Dr. Carl A. Weiss who, in turn, was shot by Long's bodyguards. I say "apparently" because there is still controversy about who shot him. Some believe that one of Long's bodyguards shot him by mistake as he was trying to shoot the shooter. Others believe that a bodyguard shot him on purpose. There was always controversy about anything in which Long was involved, even getting shot.

(continued on next page)



More about Rose . . .

Long's political influence wasn't over after his death. The Long family remained important in the state. Huey's brother, Earl, served three terms as governor of Louisiana and Russell, son of Huey and Rose, was a member of the U.S. Senate from 1948 until his retirement in 1986.

Rose's ties to Decatur County were strong and she had relatives here whom she visited many times before she died in 1970. On one occasion captured by newsmen, she was overcome by nostalgia and took off her shoes so she could wade in Sand Creek as she had done when she was a child. During most of her visits she stayed with her cousin, Elizabeth (Mrs. Clifford) Davis, 1880-1966) of Letts.

After Huey's death Rose served part of his term in the Senate and then retired to private life at her main residence in Shreveport. She died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. O. W. McFarland in Boulder, Colorado, May 27, 1970.

RENEW your membership today!

Dues are payable January 1 each year! Don't miss out on important member benefits such as receiving The Bulletin. Individual membership is \$10, couples are \$15 and contributing membership is \$30. Please make your checks payable to the Historical Society of Decatur County. Send the check with this form to:

Historical Society of Decatur County
Post Office Box 163
Greensburg, IN 47240

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State, ZIP: _____

☐ Individual Membership — \$10

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Vice President:	David Miers
Corresponding & Recording Secretary:	Susan Blanton
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Tom Barker	Charity Mitchell
Ed Deiwert	Russell Wilhoit

Society's Agent

William H. Robbins

Museum Director

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The Bulletin

The Historical Society of Decatur County
Greensburg, Indiana

Fall/Winter 2004

"History doesn't repeat
itself; it does remind us
of ourselves."

— Anonymous

The story of St. Paul

By Bob Mitchell

It is easy to get carried away thinking the pioneers of Decatur and Shelby Counties were beset by Indians, bears and wolves in a dense unpopulated wilderness. Not so. After the St. Mary's Treaty of 1818 the lands we now enjoy were surveyed in 1819, and on the first Monday of October 1820 the land office at Brookville was opened for the purchase of land. John Shelhorn, Johnathon Paul, and Arthur Major were the first to claim land on Flat Rock River in Decatur and Shelby Counties. (The "counties" were not actually created until 1822.)

Whether these men knew each other or not we don't know, but since their purchases were within a few days and their claims were nearly adjoining, it is safe to say they were acquainted. Perhaps they traveled together.

There were settlers living in the area, and both Major and Shelhorn planned towns on their property called Morven and Rockville. Those two settlements eventually failed. Johnathon Paul, however, saw the need for a gristmill and built the first one known to be in the area. He built a small, one room log cabin as his first residence, building a second when the first burned. Just a few years later he had a substantial house built on the hill above his mill. That house, built by J. Daniel French, with bricks made on the scene, is still standing and occupied.

Johnathon built the one-room log cabin and a hand cranked grist mill on the little stream known as "Bull Creek" and hence the settlement "Bull Town." That soon was changed to "Paul Town."

The fertile land, coupled with the industries created by the entrepreneurship of Johnathon's son, John, quickly attracted many settlers. John built a larger grist mill powered by the flow of "Bull" Creek. That name soon became "Mill Creek." He added a sluiceway to supply more water to his grist and flour mill and started a woolen mill and a sawmill.

One of the most important industries was begun by James Scanlan who saw the value of the natural

limestone and, with Theodore Eck and son Joseph, began to quarry both for building stone and for the burning of lime. That work became the life blood of Paul Town.

By 1854 business was booming in Paul Town. The quarries had attracted many workers, who in turn created a need for the necessary businesses to sustain the economy. John Paul created a plot of 9 blocks. Fifty-nine lots became the nucleus of a town, and St. Paul was born. The origin of the name is unknown, but we can surmise that it came from the influence of the many German Lutherans and Irish Catholics who then lived there. In the same year, he obtained a government post office.

The fledging but promising stone business led to a change in the route of a railroad which had already begun to take shape through St. Omar. The change was a good one for both the railroad and St. Paul, as the railroad meant more employment for the area. For years, the quarries supplied several hundred car-loads of stone a week.

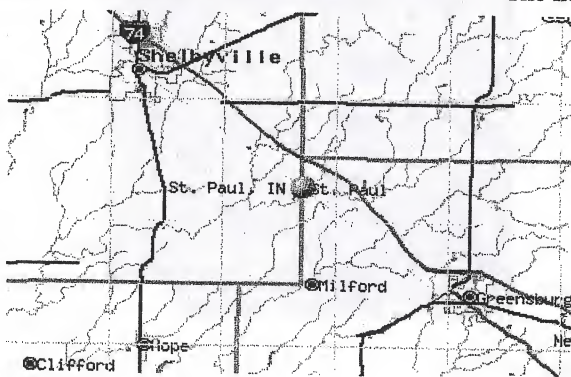
The town was soon expanded with the addition of Lord, Avery, Stevens, Phillips, and Conger streets. Dorsey Street, partly in Shelby county, was also added. John himself, joined by Higgins and Eck, plotted more lots. He, also, in partnership with his son-in-law, Erastus Floyd, developed several more improvements to

the mix.

All this activity accelerated the growth of the settlement both in industry and population. In the ensuing years, St. Paul grew to be a metropolis that had as many as sixty business and professional establishments — such as seven grocery stores, eight dry goods stores, three restaurants, four blacksmith shops, five doctors, three lawyers and of course, "uncounted" saloons.

St. Paul was incorporated in March 1921, which paved the way for basic utilities, and fire and police protection. In 1946-7 a water company, followed in 1961-2 by a sewage works, were built.

The community continued to thrive and grow on the basic industries, which were augmented by other services that made it almost unique.



(See page 4 for the rest of this story.)

The President's Letter

By Diana Springmier

Several carloads of Society members traveled to Wayne County in late September for a fall tour of historical homes. The Levi Coffin House, the 1827-1847 underground Grand Central Station of the Underground Railroad, the Garr House and barns, built in 1876 by Abram Garr, a leading manufacturer of threshing machines and steam engines from 1842-1914, and the Wayne County Historical Museum all provided an educational step back to 19th century rural Indiana. Lunch at The Olde Richmond was a relaxing rest mid-tour on the beautiful September Saturday. The well-planned day was coordinated by Charity Mitchell, program chair of the Society.

Gone back home are the wedding gowns from the spring/fall museum's exhibit which are packed in their boxes in the museum's collection and those on loan from the many Decatur County families who had shared their memories with the community. This popular display was well attended and highlighted by the wedding reception on an August Saturday afternoon in the museum's dining room, honoring the ladies who shared their gowns and other memorabilia with the community.

Accolades to Ginny Garvey, Helen Hamilton, and Charity for setting up the exhibit and to Jane Brown for catering the reception, baking the cake from the recipe she had used for her daughter's reception. For those who were unable to visit the exhibit, we've included in this issue a written history by Society member Sara Wright Picker. This description of her "going-away" suit was exhibited along with pictures of Sara in the outfit.

"Gabriel's Friends" is the theme of this Holiday Season . . .

Mark your calendar! "Gabriel's Friends" is the theme of this Holiday Season at the museum. The exhibit is from December 6—26th. The museum is open every Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p. m. and by appointment for groups. Call 812-663-8323 or 812-663-2997 to arrange a tour. We hope to see you during the holidays.

The 1874 Greensburg Fire Station will be on the 2005 Christmas ornament. The ornament is on sale after November 1st at Margaret Tremain, the Main and Lincoln Street LoBill's grocery store and the Greensburg-Decatur County Chamber of Commerce.



Museum Receives First Donations for Upstairs Rooms

With the annex well on it's way (at least on the drawing board), committees have been looking ahead to the two upstairs display rooms which will revert to bedrooms and will need to be furnished. These rooms will most likely become a children's nursery/toy room and another bedroom.

Two recent donations are the first for this project to be completed in early 2006. Mary Zoellner Keillor has gifted her Greensburg family's baby cradle, purchased in 1888 by John G. Zoellner, and used by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A 1930's child's table and chairs donated by Tom and Ann Shazer, belonging to Tom's sister Shirley, will be added to the museum's collection of children's toys.

The museum has numerous pristine condition quilts but no beds for these rooms on which to display them. A 19th Century trundle bed, rope bed, small child's bed and bookcase, a chest, washstand — all are on the wish list. It would be more desirable to have pieces with a Decatur County history, as the Zoellner-Keillor and Shazer gifts, than to buy at auction.

Even though the annex and work in the museum will not be completed until early 2006, the museum's acquisitions committee would appreciate that Society members begin "passing the word" through the county. This list will continue to be posted in future issues of the Bulletin. Call 812-663-2997 or 812-663-8323 for more information.



The museum's building committee has been meeting monthly at the dining room table with Thomas Gordon Smith, the museum annex's architect. Smith will present the program at the Annual Meeting of the Society in February 2005. Pictured left to right are: David Miers, Tom Barker, Diana Springmier, and Kathryn Bailey. Not pictured is committee member Russell Wilhoit.



The rest of the story . . . of St. Paul

Through the years, St. Paul has hosted a nation-wide flower business, a cooperage, a brick-making kiln, two saddle makers, a "frog leg business," and a buggy factory. The town has also been home to the Sun Cut Leather Company, a wholesale meat packer, a "novelty manufacturer," and an "Indian relic" company. Still the list goes on: a button factory, a lime kiln, two glove factories, a wholesale bakery, a canning company, a tire and rubber company, a smokeless powder company, a wholesale locker plant, and an airplane parts manufacturer have all called St. Paul "home."

The 20th century brought on two major changes in St. Paul, one social and the other of substance. The social side was always one of "Mama's Church" and "Papa's Lodge." John Paul had given land for both a Protestant and Catholic church and both were built. Four lodges had changed the skyline with substantial structures. There were four federated clubs and dozens of locals like The Fat Man's Club, The Anti-Kissing Club, Fast Gossip, Happy Hour Study Club, Friends of Music, Lions, Kiwanis, Junior History, Men's Study Group, numerous Business and Civic groups and others. Families lived as neighbors, shopped together and socialized there.

The other influence of the century was the development of the automobile — radio — and TV. Those three brought a new mobility and life style to the people of the world, as well as St. Paul. The automobile made it unnecessary for a downtown business section to be self-sufficient. Radio and TV demanded attention taking away some of the interest in civic or social demands. "Big Box" retailing squeezed the small town merchant into a "service" position, and the need for health care became one of HMO's rather than family.

The result of these major changes in life-style and culture is not lost on St. Paul. The benefits are as obvious

as are the perceived disadvantages. The Town has the history and luxury of being "small"; of "first name"; of "trouble free"; of "neighbor help" and — if you will — a continuing history of producing "solid citizens."

A book on Hoosier history

Would never be complete

Without a page inserted that is called

"The St. Paul" sheet

A record of the years gone by

Events held in esteem

A place in Indiana many people

Feel supreme

No statesman views, nor hero's name

(Inscribed in letters bold)

No famous (or notorious) acts

Do memories unfold

No one product dominates

The area alone

Although our Hoosier Capital

Is built with St. Paul stone.

No: - Paul Town's contribution

To Indiana's fame

Is more than just emotion at

The mention of the name

The Town has made its impact on

The history of the State

By the pattern of its living and

Its slow and easy gait!

**Help
Wanted**

The Society is looking for a part-time assistant. Job duties will include clerical responsibilities and the individual must be able to work independently. The job will be approximately 10 hours per week, and the pay is \$10 per hour. For more information, interested individuals

should contact Charity Mitchell at 812-663-5141.

Mark your Calendar

"Gabriel's Angels" will greet you the second Sunday in December, the 12th, from 1:00—4:00 p.m. at the annual museum's Christmas Open house. A harpist, children caroling, playing instruments, and serving mouthwatering bread pudding will be at the Victorian brick on North Franklin Street to celebrate the holidays. Bring your family and join in.



Contributions

Have something to contribute to *The Bulletin*? The Editor is accepting stories, ideas, pictures and /or comments! Please send them to the Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, Indiana 47240. All contributions are most welcome!

A Wedding Story

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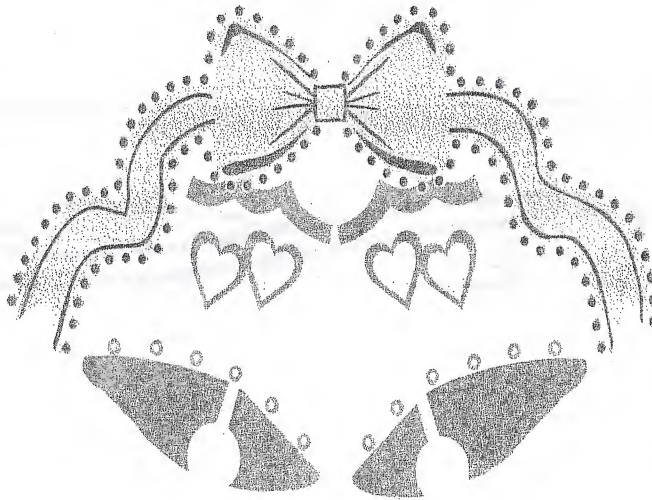
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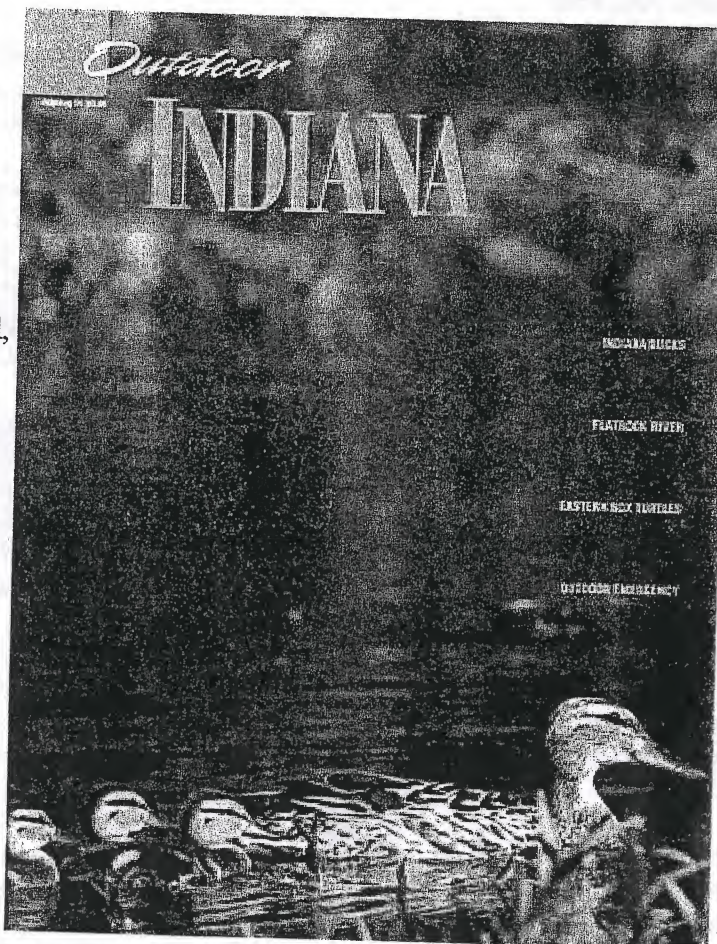
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"That was also the summer that cousin Sally Billieu came from Louisiana to make her home with Grandpa Miller. He met her train at Westport and stopped with her on his way home. I was playing around the new house when the word came that cousin Sally was there. We children all rushed out to see her and she was very friendly, though my mother scolded us so because we were very dirty.

"The McConnells did several pieces of work in the neighborhood. They built a big barn for Grandpa Miller and the Mapleton Church. Peter McConnell later married Sally Billieu and the couple had two children — Rose and Gilman McConnell.

For a few years the family moved to Greensburg and lived on East Central Avenue. When Rose was about nine years old, in 1901,

the family moved to Shreveport, Louisiana. Gilman became a veterinarian in Louisiana and Rose attended public schools and secretarial school.

Rose met Huey Long while he was selling vegetable oil door to door. As part of the promotion for the product, he conducted a cake-baking contest in Shreveport. The winner of that contest was Rose McConnell. She married Huey Long on April 12, 1913. They had three children.

Huey Long's life and death has been the subject of more books, movies and TV programs than any other politician who didn't become President of the United States. President of the U.S. was what Huey was aiming for when he was assassinated in September, 1935.

Note: Some of the best known books and movies include *All the Kings Men* by Robert Penn Warren (1949) and the movie of the same name; *Huey Long* by T. Harry Williams (1969); *The Career of a Tinpot Napoleon* by John K. Fineran (1986); *The Kingfish of Louisiana* by Suzanne LeVert (1995); the TV documentary by Ken Burns and at least two books by Long himself, *Every Man a King* (1934) and *My First Days in the White House* (1934, reprinted 1972). If those don't interest you there are dozens more.

Long was apparently shot by Dr. Carl A. Weiss who, in turn, was shot by Long's bodyguards. I say "apparently" because there is still controversy about who shot him. Some believe that one of Long's bodyguards shot him by mistake as he was trying to shoot the shooter. Others believe that a bodyguard shot him on purpose. There was always controversy about anything in which Long was involved, even getting shot..

(continued on next page)



More about Rose . . .

Long's political influence wasn't over after his death. The Long family remained important in the state. Huey's brother, Earl, served three terms as governor of Louisiana and Russell, son of Huey and Rose, was a member of the U.S. Senate from 1948 until his retirement in 1986.

Rose's ties to Decatur County were strong and she had relatives here whom she visited many times before she died in 1970. On one occasion captured by newsmen, she was overcome by nostalgia and took off her shoes so she could wade in Sand Creek as she had done when she was a child. During most of her visits she stayed with her cousin, Elizabeth (Mrs. Clifford) Davis, 1880-1966) of Letts.

After Huey's death Rose served part of his term in the Senate and then retired to private life at her main residence in Shreveport. She died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. O. W. McFarland in Boulder, Colorado, May 27, 1970.

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